

PI report from Hasselt

For the past 3 years a Belgian group in Hasselt has had the opportunity to take up a stand at a social and cultural trade show.

We are lucky that participating in this tradeshow is free of charge. We found this tradeshow when we were distributing PI pamphlets all over Hasselt. We asked if we could put some folders in the culture centre and then they started talking to us about this trade show. These people were very kind to us and were very open to hear the message of OA.

A nearby OA group Sint-Niklaas had already experienced this kind of step 12 work, so again we were lucky to have their support and help, we could use their equipment like: spots, curtains, pamphlets and slogans.

For some people it is difficult to speak about OA during the tradeshow; however they were able to help behind the scene. I explain later why. It was wonderful as we got a lot of support from other groups who didn't feel threatened in their anonymity. A very nice thing is that members from Sint-Niklaas come to Hasselt and from Hasselt to Sint-Niklaas; helping each other.

This trade show is a whole weekend. It starts on Saturday at 10AM till 6PM and on Sunday the same.

On Friday we had the people behind the scenes who organised the stand. On a table we put OA pamphlets, the translated courier, the OA 12&12, a candle and some flowers. The group conscience of Hasselt decided every year to put flowers on the table which has helped to attract people.

The experience has taught us that it is important to sit with two people behind the table so you feel supported in this service and you have a safety net. An experienced member together with a less experienced one is a good match.

I remember my first time that some people laughed when hearing information from me and I took it personal. By talking this through with my fellow college I changed thoughts and I didn't feel isolated in my thoughts. After a while I could even laugh at the funny things that were said. I felt so connected with this program and with everyone around the world.

It is amazing how this service helps me in my recovery. Just talking to people about OA is reaching out hands and planting seeds and mostly doing step 12.

Besides a lot of group support we also got support from the Flemish intergroup; they helped us with transport costs.

I would recommend every country to try this service. It helps us recover on different levels. The first year we got a member who came to OA and still is in OA. This last year we had no one. This is okay for us because the biggest gift is that people know and hear about OA and might tell someone who is in need of OA. We plant seeds.

Thank you for reading and warm regards from the Flemish representative of the Be Intergroup.